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General and complete disarmament: the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons in all its aspects

Sixth Biennial Meeting of States to Consider the Implementation of the Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects
New York, 6-10 June 2016

The illicit trade in small arms and light weapons in all its aspects

Report of the Secretary-General

Summary

The present report is divided into three sections:

(a) The illicit trade in small arms and light weapons, and general implementation of the Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects;

(b) An update on developments in small arms and light weapons manufacturing, technology and design and their implications for the full and effective implementation of the International Tracing Instrument;

(c) The adequacy, effectiveness and sustainability of financial and technical assistance, including the transfer of technology and equipment, particularly to developing countries since 2001, for the full implementation of the Programme of Action. This section also covers options for the enhanced funding of activities relating to the implementation of the Programme of Action and the International Tracing Instrument, including trust fund arrangements; and options for the establishment of programmes for the training of relevant officials nominated by their respective Governments in areas relating to the implementation of the Programme of Action and the International Tracing Instrument.

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I. Introduction

1. In its resolution 70/49, the General Assembly requested the Secretary-General, taking into account the recommendations and requests made by the Fifth Biennial Meeting of States to Consider the Implementation of the Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects, in paragraphs 27 and 38 of its outcome document (A/CONF.192/BMS/2014/2, annex), to submit a report dedicated to those issues and on the implementation of the resolution for consideration at the Sixth Biennial Meeting of States, in 2016, and to the Assembly at its seventy-first session.

2. The recommendations and requests in the above-mentioned outcome document are as follows:

(a) In paragraph 27 (d), States undertook to consider developments in small arms and light weapons manufacturing, technology and design and their implications for the full and effective implementation of the International Tracing Instrument;

(b) In paragraph 27 (e), States recommended that the General Assembly request the Secretary-General to provide through his annual consolidated report on small arms and light weapons, as required, further information relevant to those developments, building upon his initial report (A/CONF.192/BMS/2014/1) and discussions that would occur at the 2015 open-ended meeting of governmental experts, for consideration by Member States at relevant future meetings on the implementation of the Programme of Action and the International Tracing Instrument;

(c) In paragraph 38 (m), States requested the Secretariat to present, for consideration at the 2015 open-ended meeting of governmental experts, options for the enhanced funding of activities relating to the implementation of the Programme of Action and the International Tracing Instrument, including trust fund arrangements; and for the establishment of programmes for the training of relevant officials, nominated by their respective Governments, in areas related to the implementation of the Programme of Action and the International Tracing Instrument. The present report will provide information additional to that presented by the Secretariat at the second Open-ended Meeting of Governmental Experts on the Implementation of the Programme of Action, held from 1 to 5 June 2015;

(d) In paragraph 38 (n) (i), States also requested the Secretariat to carry out a comprehensive study on the adequacy, effectiveness and sustainability of financial and technical assistance, including the transfer of technology and equipment, particularly to developing countries since 2001, for the full implementation of the Programme of Action, and to submit the study for discussion at the Open-ended Meeting of Governmental Experts in 2015 and consideration at the Sixth Biennial Meeting of States.

3. The present report is submitted pursuant to these requests made by the General Assembly. It will be divided into three sections, as set out below.

4. Section II will address the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons and general implementation of the Programme of Action.

5. Section III will provide an update on developments in small arms and light weapons manufacturing, technology and design and their implications for the full and effective implementation of the International Tracing Instrument.

6. Section IV will focus on the adequacy, effectiveness and sustainability of financial and technical assistance, including the transfer of technology and equipment, particularly to developing countries since 2001, for the full implementation of the Programme of Action. It will also provide information on options for the enhanced funding of activities relating to the implementation of the Programme of Action and the International Tracing Instrument, including trust fund arrangements; and options for the establishment of programmes for the training of relevant officials nominated by their respective Governments in areas relating to the implementation of the Programme of Action and the International Tracing Instrument.

II. The illicit trade in small arms and light weapons and implementation of the Programme of Action

Impact of the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons

7. One in four people on the planet, or more than 1.5 billion, live in fragile and conflict-affected States or in countries with very high levels of criminal violence.[1]

8. Nowadays, more than half a million people die a violent death each year and around 70,000 people perish as a direct consequence of armed conflict.[2]

9. The number of civil wars in the world has tripled over the past decade. Wars, conflict and persecution have forced more people than at any other time since records began to flee their homes and seek refuge and safety elsewhere. Refugees and internally displaced persons endure some of the worst small arms-related violence.[3]

10. The widespread availability of illicit small arms and light weapons and their ammunition is a key enabler of conflict and endemic crime. Such weapons may originate from varied sources. Shipments of small arms from abroad to conflict zones and to areas experiencing pervasive crime can be sizeable, but are most often small-scale consignments: a steady trickle of weapons across porous borders. The cumulative destabilizing force of such trade — for example, as equipment of foreign terrorist fighters, pirates, armed groups or organized crime syndicates — is not to be underestimated.

11. Domestically, small arms and ammunition often enter illicit circulation through theft, resale and corruption. Diversion of small arms and light weapons and their ammunition is a colossal problem in many parts of the world. It may occur as a result of a transfer without proper controls, unauthorized retransfer, thefts from

[1] World Bank, *World Development Report: Conflict, Security and Development* (Washington, D.C., 2011).

[2] Secretariat of the Geneva Declaration on Armed Violence and Development, *Global Burden of Armed Violence 2015: Every Body Counts* (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2015).

[3] Forced Migration Online, "Displacement and small arms". Available from http://forcedmigration.org/research-resources/expert-guides/small-arms-and-forced-migration/displacement-and-small-arms.

poorly secured stockpiles, handouts to armed groups or civilian populations, or barter involving natural resources. Corruption is often associated with diversion. Government depots remain prominent sources of illicit weapons.

12. Those suffering most from the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons are civilian populations trapped in situations of armed violence in settings of both crime and conflict, often in conditions of poverty, deprivation and extreme inequality. Conflict is a key factor in leaving almost 800 million people without enough food.[4]

13. The 2015 global study on the implementation of Security Council resolution 1325 (2000) contained a resounding call to accelerate disarmament and drew a strong parallel between the global arms trade and the insecurity of women and girls. The study articulated the linkage between small arms violence, gender-based violence and organized crime.

14. The illicit trade in small arms and light weapons leads to the suspension or delay of life-saving humanitarian and development operations because of armed attacks against United Nations staff and staff of other humanitarian organizations. The consequences have a negative impact on almost all areas of the work of the United Nations. Be it in maintaining international peace and security, promoting social and economic development, supporting peacekeeping operations and peacebuilding efforts, monitoring sanctions and arms embargoes, delivering food aid, protecting and assisting internally displaced persons and refugees, protecting children and civilians, promoting gender equality or fostering the rule of law, the United Nations has faced serious challenges and setbacks that ultimately can be traced to the consequences of the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons.

Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects

15. In 2001, Member States adopted the Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects. This politically binding instrument laid the foundation for action at the national, regional and global levels and has become a valuable tool for States, international organizations and civil society. It recommended starting negotiations on a separate instrument on tracing illicit small arms — negotiations that were concluded in 2005 — and it paved the way for the increased attention of Member States to the issue of illicit small arms brokering. The Programme of Action contains concrete suggestions for improved national legislation and controls and international assistance and cooperation.

National level

16. Further progress has been made in the implementation of the Programme of Action. An increasing number of States has improved legislation related to stemming the uncontrolled proliferation of small arms at the national level. Marking at manufacture is often in place. Weapons collection and destruction initiatives have sometimes led to good results. Some States have integrated small arms action plans

[4] International Food Policy Research Institute, *2015 Global Hunger Index: Armed Conflict and the Challenge of Hunger* (Bonn/Washington, D.C./Dublin, 2015).

into national development strategies. In their national reports, States needing assistance increasingly indicate so.

17. However, many of the requirements of the instrument for implementation at the national level remain unfulfilled. Inadequate stockpile management persists as an acute problem in many parts of the world. Illicit manufacture, or craft production, continues on a large scale. Marking small arms on import too often is not undertaken. Security forces often are not able to enforce the law and provide safety to communities, and the setting up of procedures for effective operational information exchange with investigative and law enforcement authorities from other States and with the International Criminal Police Organization (INTERPOL) leaves much to be desired.

Regional level

18. The measures suggested in the Programme of Action at the regional level have prompted some promising regional initiatives to curb the illicit trade in small arms, especially from a norm-setting point of view. More efforts are needed to reflect these initiatives in national legislation and functioning procedures. Where resources are made available, regional organizations have been able to make a real difference on the ground; technical support and assistance is often provided by programmes, initiatives and projects of United Nations funds and agencies. These partnerships ensure synergy and the effective use of resources.

19. The League of Arab States and the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe are examples of regional organizations that regularly align the timing of regional meetings regarding illicit small arms and light weapons with the global cycle of meetings. Connecting efforts at the regional and global levels — as mandated in the outcome of the second United Nations Conference to Review Progress Made in the Implementation of the Programme of Action, held in 2012[5] — can create a synergetic interaction that has a positive impact on implementation at the national level.

Global level

20. At the global level, States were able to agree to substantive outcomes of the biennial meetings held in 2010 and 2014 to consider the implementation of the Programme of Action, and the review conference held in 2012. They held technical discussions in two open-ended meetings of governmental experts (in 2011 and 2015). Progress in these various meetings included understandings to work on measurability, on gender considerations, on the value of ballistics research in weapons tracing, on preventing depot explosions, on discussing the impact of new weapons-related technologies and on considering improved mechanisms for assistance and cooperation. The coming two years will provide the opportunity to develop these and other issues into concrete elements for a tailored work programme for a new six-year cycle, which will start with the third United Nations Conference to Review Progress Made in the Implementation of the Programme of Action, to be held in 2018.

[5] A/CONF.192/2012/RC/4, annex I, sect. III., para. 7.

21. Progress in related processes also has a positive impact on implementation of the Programme of Action. Most importantly, the adoption of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development — agreed on by Member States at the beginning of the seventieth session of the General Assembly (resolution 70/1) — was a defining moment for global efforts to prevent, combat and eradicate the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons. Through the inclusion of a specific target to significantly reduce illicit arms flows by 2030, States embedded the objectives of the Programme of Action in a time-bound, measurable, development-focused perspective that may now guide further work under the Programme of Action.

22. The entry into force of the Arms Trade Treaty in December 2014 was a second recent momentous occasion. The proper regulation of the international arms trade and the taking of steps to prevent the diversion of weaponry and ammunition have become binding commitments for States parties to the Treaty. Importantly, the Treaty contains a provision on gender-based violence. Progress in the implementation of the Treaty is of immediate relevance to implementation of the Programme of Action.

23. Other progress can also be noted. The Security Council adopted two resolutions on the issue of small arms (resolutions 2117 (2013) and 2220 (2015)), which had a particular focus on the small arms situation in conflict and peacekeeping settings. In the latter resolution, the Council called for enhanced reporting synergies on the issue of the illicit use of small arms and light weapons. It noted the utility of the United Nations Register of Conventional Arms in helping the Sanctions Committees to determine whether an exemption to an arms embargo is justified. The Council acknowledged the urgent need to address the issue of ammunition along with the issue of small arms and light weapons. Moreover, in its resolution 2242 (2015), the Council encouraged the empowerment of women to participate in the design and implementation of efforts to prevent the illicit transfer of small arms.

24. In 2015, the Human Rights Council adopted resolution 29/10, on human rights and the regulation of civilian acquisition, possession and use of firearms, in which the Council requested the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights to present to it a report on the different ways in which civilian acquisition, possession and use of firearms have been effectively regulated, with a view to assessing the contribution of such regulation to the protection of human rights, and to identify best practices that may guide States to further develop relevant national regulation if they so deem it necessary. The ensuing report (A/HRC/32/21) provides an overview of the impact of the misuse of firearms on the enjoyment of human rights. It includes recommendations for States to "provide victims of firearms violence with effective measures of protection and reparation, including access to adequate health care", and to impose appropriate penalties for offences involving the misuse or unlawful possession of firearms, the illicit sale of firearms and their unauthorized international transfer. Importantly, it is stressed in the report that "firearm violence and the underlying proliferation of firearms, including illicit firearms, must be systematically measured, monitored and reported".

25. States are paying increased attention to the provisions of the Protocol against the Illicit Manufacturing of and Trafficking in Firearms, Their Parts and Components and Ammunition, supplementing the United Nations Convention

against Transnational Organized Crime (the Firearms Protocol), through a recently established dedicated working group and tools developed by the Secretariat.[6]

26. Solid advances were made with regard to the consistency and comprehensiveness of United Nations support for the full life-cycle management of small arms and light weapons. In order to provide dependable, high-quality assistance across offices and agencies, the United Nations system has developed modular packages of good practices on small arms, light weapons and ammunition control (the International Small Arms Control Standards and the International Ammunition Technical Guidelines), which are publicly available.[7] The Security Council, in its resolution 2220 (2015), recognized the value of the Standards and the Guidelines, as did the outcome of the Fifth Biennial Meeting of States to Consider the Implementation of the Programme of Action (see A/CONF.192/BMS/2014/2, annex, paras. 12 and 17 (e)). Wide application of the Standards and the Guidelines by the United Nations system, as well as by other stakeholders, underscores the value of coordinated approaches on highly cross-sectional topics. Many other entities within the United Nations and outside of it now make routine use of these guidelines.

27. Within INTERPOL, a structure for operational information exchange on illicit small arms has been established, the Illicit Arms Records and Tracing Management System database. INTERPOL reports that access to the database is extended to all INTERPOL member States, that 146 countries are connected to it, that the database currently has more than 785,000 illicit firearms records, and that more than 12,000 trace requests have been received.

28. Within the World Customs Organization, States adopted a small arms and light weapons strategy in 2015. The strategy is aimed at assisting the 180 member States of the World Customs Organization to combat illicit cross-border trafficking of arms, their parts and ammunition. The work of the secretariat of the World Customs Organization on this topic has been focused on setting up coordinated global operational activities to detect illicit shipments in international supply chains, as well as policy guidance, technical assistance and capacity-building.

29. Lack of progress at the global level is also noticeable. Importantly, until now, the Programme of Action was deficient on measurability and on including specific numerical targets. It does not provide concrete procedures for operational information exchange among States' investigative or law enforcement authorities, nor does it provide a framework to facilitate international assistance and cooperation among States. Hence, States have had difficulty in finding cooperative structures and linking needs with resources.

30. The issue of small arms intersects with many related themes. It is relevant in areas ranging from peacekeeping, inner-city crime and elections to maritime security, forced migration and public health; from human rights, trade policy and aviation security to military stockpile management, humanitarian aid and development. Because of the deeply cross-cutting nature of the issue, meetings under the Programme of Action should take into account that several national agencies may need to be involved and that the international work relating to small arms control is undertaken simultaneously in many forums.

[6] See www.unodc.org/unodc/en/firearms-protocol/firearmsprotocol.html.

[7] See http://smallarmsstandards.org and www.un.org/disarmament/convarms/ammunition/IATG.

31. In the present report, suggestions are provided that may assist States in further strengthening their implementation of the Programme of Action and the International Tracing Instrument by focusing recommendations in particular on how States can improve global process management, both under the Programme of Action meetings and as an effective contribution towards the mechanism underpinning the Sustainable Development Goals. The start of preparations for the third United Nations Conference to Review Progress Made in the Implementation of the Programme of Action — to be held in 2018 — makes this endeavour even more topical.

Legislation, law enforcement and information exchange

32. Up-to-date national legislation and well-functioning law enforcement remain essential elements for successfully addressing the illicit arms trade at the national level. Also, it is key for any Government to have in place tested procedures allowing for frequent information exchange between the police, intelligence agencies, armed forces, border control, coastguard and other security sector agencies.

33. Meanwhile, the value of cross-border information exchange on matters pertaining to national security has also become more prominent. Under relevant treaties and agreements — including the Programme of Action and the International Tracing Instrument, the Firearms Protocol and the Arms Trade Treaty — States consistently underline the need for exchanging operational information. Such information exchange could be on weapons tracing, preventing diversion, trafficking routes, illicit brokers, sources of illicit supply, methods of concealment and enhancing capacities for statistics and data collection and analysis.

34. However, cooperation and information exchange on security-related matters continues to be a serious challenge within and between countries. Although threats have internationalized more than ever — in particular, transnational organized crime and violent extremism — defence and security sectors in most States often remain wary of sharing crucial information. Progress in addressing small arms control will be limited where cross-border trust levels are low, where procedures for contacting international colleagues are not engrained in workplans and training programmes, where information is shielded rather than shared, and where security- and confidence-building measures to improve international relations are not in place.

Recommendation 1

States are encouraged to give further priority to cross-border information-sharing on arms trafficking. Concluding bilateral or regional mutual legal assistance treaties or agreements is an essential step in that regard. Such instruments can be agreed in the context of cooperation on transnational crime, border controls and other areas.[8]

[8] See, for example, United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, *Manual on Mutual Legal Assistance and Extradition* (Vienna, 2012), available from www.unodc.org/documents/organized-crime/Publications/Mutual_Legal_Assistance_Ebook_E.pdf, and the World Customs Organization Model Bilateral Agreement on Mutual Administrative Assistance in Customs Matters, available from http://www.wcoomd.org/en/topics/enforcement-and-compliance/instruments-and-tools/~/media/DFAAF3B7943E4A53B12475C7CE54D8BD.ashx.

Recommendation 2

Under paragraph 31 (a) of the International Tracing Instrument, the Secretariat is tasked with collecting from States information on their national point of contact for the Instrument. At the same time, for outreach to law enforcement in other countries, States have designated national central bureaux within the context of INTERPOL cooperation, linking national police with the global INTERPOL network.[9] The INTERPOL Illicit Arms Records and Tracing Management System has been established as an effective operational tool assisting all States in weapons tracing. Moreover, States have set up a directory of competent national authorities under the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime, which has explicit competencies on the illicit manufacturing of and trafficking in firearms.[10] It is recommended that tools for practical information exchange relating to cross-border weapons tracing be streamlined by using these two existing operational mechanisms to contact other countries regarding a weapons trace.

Recommendation 3

Under paragraph 31 (b) of the International Tracing Instrument, the Office for Disarmament Affairs of the Secretariat is tasked with collecting from States information on their national marking practices. Only a few States have provided this information as part of their national reports. It is recommended that this information be collected within INTERPOL, where it would complement the INTERPOL Firearms Reference Table, the INTERPOL Ballistic Information Network and the Illicit Arms Records and Tracing Management System. The International Tracing Instrument would remain a valuable normative agreement, whereas operational databases on weapons tracing would thus be brought together comprehensively.

Stockpile management; disarmament, demobilization and reintegration; and security sector reform

35. The management of weapons stockpiles of armed forces and law enforcement has emerged as one of the greatest challenges relating to small arms and light weapons control. Stocks are susceptible to diversion if they are not secured appropriately. Diversion tends to feed and sustain the activities of armed groups, terrorist organizations and organized criminal networks. It is one of the principal sources of illicit ammunition (see A/63/182).

36. A central element in adequate stockpile management is the identification of surpluses, namely, the weapons and ammunition that do not constitute an operational need. Authoritative assessments estimate that some 40 per cent of military firearms in the arsenals of States' armed forces can be considered as surplus and should therefore be priority items for destruction.[11]

[9] See www.interpol.int/About-INTERPOL/Structure-and-governance/National-Central-Bureaus.

[10] See www.unodc.org/compauth/en/index.html.

[11] Small Arms Survey, *Small Arms Survey 2008: Risk and Resilience* (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2008).

37. When surpluses are not recognized, the entirety of the national weapons stockpile may continue to be seen as of operational value. Although not used, weapons and ammunition surpluses continue to fill warehouses and to pose a grave year-on-year risk.

38. Defective stockpile management has been assessed as the norm rather than the exception in many developing countries and in States recovering from armed conflict. In those circumstances, it is not only surplus stocks that should be the focus of attention, but the lack of appropriate policy behind this situation. Governments remain unaware of surpluses while their national stockpiles continue to be a source of illicit weaponry and often remain an explosive hazard.

39. Destruction is the preferred solution for surplus stockpiles of arms and ammunition, not only from a safety and security perspective, but also when considering the costs of destruction over the costs associated with safe long-term storage and maintenance.[12]

40. Key parts of the United Nations system, including the Office for Disarmament Affairs and its regional centres for peace and disarmament, the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), the Department of Peacekeeping Operations of the Secretariat, including its Police Division and the Mine Action Service, the United Nations Development Programme and others, are contributing to securing stockpiles and to the relevant training of national law enforcement and security forces of affected countries, as well as troop-contributing countries. For all actors involved, the standards on weapons and ammunition management developed by the United Nations — the International Small Arms Control Standards and the International Ammunition Technical Guidelines — form consistent guidance in this regard.

41. For peacekeepers, responsibilities in the civilian, post-conflict sphere have gained further prominence. This has led to a shift in emphasis from disarming ex-combatants towards weapons control at the community level. Moreover, it is seen as essential that disarmament, demobilization and reintegration interventions build the capacity of national institutions and national officials. Such programming should assist the transition to adequate civilian rule and to domestic responsibility for the full spectrum of national security.

Recommendation 4

Member States are encouraged to make every effort to secure arms and ammunition stockpiles and shield them from diversion. Existing voluntary guidance, such as the International Small Arms Control Standards and the International Ammunition Technical Guidelines developed under the United Nations SaferGuard programme, can be of use in improving arms and ammunition stockpile management practices. Relevant peacekeeping and peacebuilding missions should be consistently mandated to assist host countries in their stockpile management. More can be done to mainstream physical security and stockpile management programmes in peacekeeping mandates and

[12] Mandy Turner, *Costs of Disarmament: Cost Benefit Analysis of SALW Destruction versus Storage* (Geneva, United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research, 2006).

concepts of operations. Special attention is required for the weapons management needs of countries bordering conflict areas.

Recommendation 5

United Nations police and mine action components and, where relevant, United Nations regional centres for peace and disarmament can be further strengthened to take on tasks in combating illicit arms and ammunition, including weapons collection; disarmament, demobilization and reintegration programmes; physical security and stockpile management practices; record-keeping and tracing; development of national export and import control systems; countering trafficking; enhancement of border security; armed violence prevention; and strengthening judicial institutions.

Recommendation 6

The delivery of security services at the community level is a crucial component in the mitigation of armed violence and crime. Such efforts should be planned in an integrated manner with other mission and United Nations country team components, including police, justice, corrections, security sector reform, mine action, gender and human rights. Only a comprehensive approach can sustainably improve the delivery of security services at community levels and make communities safer. Women's and youth groups can be powerful actors in monitoring agreements if given the access and support to do so.

Measurability

42. Within the context of the Programme of Action, States have agreed to encourage the further development of mechanisms to increase the measurability and effectiveness of international cooperation and assistance (see A/CONF.192/BMS/2014/2, para. 37).

43. Measurability is increasingly seen not only as a means to monitor global progress but as a vital self-assessment tool for Governments to learn where they can improve in achieving their own objectives. As world leaders formulated it in the context of the Sustainable Development Goals, the objective of systematic follow-up and review is to promote accountability to citizens, support effective international cooperation in achieving the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and foster exchanges of best practices and mutual learning (see General Assembly resolution 70/1, para. 73).

44. As mentioned in paragraph 21 above, States have included the key subject matter of the Programme of Action in the Sustainable Development Goals. Under target 16.4 of the Goals, Member States aim, by 2030, to significantly reduce illicit arms flows, among other things. Hence, States have accomplished their objective to introduce measurability in global efforts to prevent, combat and eradicate the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons.

45. The Programme of Action's conceptual linkage to the 2030 Agenda is reinforced by the provision in paragraph 58 of the 2030 Agenda to encourage ongoing efforts by States in other forums to address key issues which pose potential challenges to the implementation of the Agenda.

Indicators under target 16.4 of the Sustainable Development Goals

46. In paragraph 75 of the 2030 Agenda, it is mentioned that the Goals and targets will be followed up and reviewed using a set of global indicators. These will be complemented by indicators at the regional and national levels, which will be developed by Member States. In 2016, global indicator 16.4.2 under target 16.4 was agreed by the Statistical Commission: the percentage of seized small arms and light weapons that are recorded and traced, in accordance with international standards and legal instruments (see E/CN.3/2016/2/Rev.1).[13] This indicator is classified as containing conceptually clear, agreed definitions; methodology and standards are available but data are not produced regularly by countries.

47. The relevant instruments mentioned in the global indicator may include the Firearms Protocol, the Arms Trade Treaty, and the Programme of Action and the International Tracing Instrument. Of those, the Programme of Action and the International Tracing Instrument reflect a universally agreed approach to matters pertaining to small arms control.

Supporting national data collection on seizure, record-keeping and tracing of weapons

48. In general terms, States have committed themselves to collect the data relevant for reaching the Sustainable Development Goals through their national statistical offices. However, on several indicators, many national statistical offices do not yet collect data. Indicator 16.4.2 is a case in point. In the 2030 Agenda, the General Assembly recognized this problem and called for increased support for strengthening data collection and capacity-building in Member States, to develop national and global baselines where they do not yet exist (see resolution 70/1, para. 57).

Existing reporting mechanisms

49. States have underlined that data and information from existing reporting mechanisms should be used where possible (General Assembly resolution 70/1, para. 48) and that follow-up and review processes will build on existing platforms and processes, where these exist (ibid., para. 74 (f)). Paragraph 36 of the International Tracing Instrument includes a commitment by countries to report on a biennial basis. National reports under the International Tracing Instrument could therefore be instrumental and efficient for global data collection on indicator 16.4.2.

Recommendation 7

States are encouraged to develop capacity within their national law enforcement systems and national statistical offices to sustainably collect data on indicator 16.4.2. Until such national streamlining has been completed, biennial national reports under the Programme of Action and the International Tracing Instrument can be used to convey national information on indicator 16.4.2 to the Secretariat. This ensures that relevant national

[13] The global indicator framework was developed by the Inter-Agency and Expert Group on Sustainable Development Goal Indicators and agreed on by the Statistical Commission. It has been submitted to the Economic and Social Council and the General Assembly for further adoption.

information will be fed into the progress reports on the Sustainable Development Goals.

Recommendation 8

Governments are encouraged to conduct a self-assessment of their national small arms controls and pinpoint areas that may be in need of strengthening. For such an exercise, an International Small Arms Control Standards assessment tool is available.[14]

III. Update on developments in small arms and light weapons manufacturing, technology and design and their implications for the full and effective implementation of the International Tracing Instrument

Materials[15]

50. Plastics are used increasingly in the production of firearm frames and receivers. Plastics provide lower cost, lighter weight, resistance to moisture and thermal neutrality.

51. Markings stamped in steel, when subsequently erased, can often be recovered because the stamping leaves a permanent subsurface deformation in the deeper crystalline structure of the steel. Markings cannot be stamped in plastic as in steel; plastics are best marked using laser engraving or micro-percussion (also called dot peen stamping). Markings in plastics, once erased, cannot be recovered as no trace is left in the deeper crystalline structure of the weapon.

Implications for the implementation of the Programme of Action and the International Tracing Instrument

52. An alternative for marking plastic weapons parts is to add a metallic insert or tag in the main plastic component on which markings can be added, although such metallic inserts have regularly been found removed after the weapon's diversion. All in all, the advent of plastics in weapons manufacture complicates tracing considerably.

Modular weapons

53. Increasingly, rifles are manufactured onto which can be attached an array of parts essential to the operation of the weapon to obtain different configurations suited for different purposes.

54. Modularity allows for temporary changes to a weapon's calibre, a fundamental characteristic for its identification. In such cases, the same serial number, if marked only on the receiver or another component, can be associated with different calibres.

[14] Developed by the United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research (see http://smallarmsstandards.org/tools).

[15] Further to the report of the Secretary-General (A/CONF.192/BMS/2014/1).

Implications for the implementation of the Programme of Action and the International Tracing Instrument

55. The fact that modular weapons can be fitted with different components, including from other weapons, could result in different serial numbers appearing on different parts of the same weapon, increasing the risk of misidentification.

56. It could also be maintained that a modular weapon found with more than one serial number actually provides more potential clues to enable a successful trace. Paragraph 10 of the International Tracing Instrument prescribes the application of a unique marking to an essential or structural component of the weapon, such as the frame and/or receiver, and also encourages the marking of other parts of the weapon, such as the barrel and/or slide or cylinder.

Three-dimensional printing and craft production

57. After manufacturers had mastered the production of small arms mainly made of plastics, it was a small step to use three-dimensional (3-D) printing to produce such weapons. Now, even 3-D printing using metals is becoming an option.

58. 3-D printing is not the only method of making weapons away from recognized industrial facilities. Sophisticated craft weapons are being made in workshops on several continents.[16] Often, these artefacts are produced outside of State controls. Craft production can range from pistols and submachine guns to mortars, single-launch rockets, grenade launchers and rocket-propelled grenades. Craft production can include the reloading of cartridges.

Implications for the implementation of the Programme of Action and the International Tracing Instrument

59. At the moment, weapon theft or purchase on the illicit market may require less effort and lower costs than 3-D printing of a reliable weapon. However, once production costs decrease and quality increases, 3-D printing will become a lucrative alternative for small-scale illicit weapons manufacture. States may wish to assess whether their national regulations — including their national control list definitions — adequately cover 3-D printing technology.

Microstamping

60. When a small arm with a microscopic code laser-engraved onto the tip of its firing pin is fired, the etchings are transferred to the cartridge case. If the cartridge case is recovered, this microscopic code — identifying the weapon's serial number — can help to trace the firearm from which the shot was fired to its last registered owner. Thus, microstamping of cartridges can help to trace a weapon that is not found.

61. In 2008, the International Association of Chiefs of Police adopted a resolution supporting the use of microstamping technology in criminal investigations. The

[16] Eric Berman, "Craft Production of Small Arms", *Small Arms Survey Research Notes*, No. 3 (March 2011). Available from http://smallarmssurvey.org/fileadmin/docs/H-Research_Notes/SAS-Research-Note-3.pdf.

Association specifically identified microstamping as an inexpensive yet effective way to mark and identify cartridge cases.[17]

Implications for the implementation of the Programme of Action and the International Tracing Instrument

62. Microstamping technology is increasingly mentioned as a serious improvement in law enforcement investigations. Member States could consider including it in their national regulations.

Record-keeping and stockpile management

63. Barcodes, radio frequency identification and biometrics — for example, fingerprint recognition — all come under the umbrella of automatic identification and data collection technology. Such methods electronically identify objects and collect data on them. These technologies have been adapted to a range of applications related to small arms and light weapons stockpile management so as to improve identification, safety and tracking.

64. Portable gun locks can be inserted into the barrel or cartridge chamber of weapons and digitally locked to ensure secure storage or transport. Arms storage devices and containers are available whereby weapons can only be removed after entering a code number or scanning a fingerprint, or by way of a radio-frequency identification application. In this way, it is possible to track and document which individual has used a specific weapon, when and for how long.

Implications for the implementation of the Programme of Action and the International Tracing Instrument

65. Poor stockpile management around the world remains an area of disturbing concern. Many States lack thorough planning and consistent attention to safe storage, handling, transportation and disposal of State-owned weapons. Poor national inventory practices mean that surpluses cannot be identified, leading to extensive build-ups of frequently unnecessary stockpiles. Although adequate weapons stockpile management is entirely possible with traditional safety methods, new technologies — when properly applied and maintained — can assist in making procedures watertight.

Recommendation 9

The second Open-ended Meeting of Governmental Experts on the Implementation of the Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects (New York, 1-5 June 2015) considered developments on small arms and light weapons technology and its implications at the technical level. States, at the Sixth Biennial Meeting of States to Consider the Implementation of the Programme of Action and at the seventy-first session of the General Assembly, may wish to identify policy implications of these discussions.

[17] International Association of Chiefs of Police, "2008 resolutions adopted at the 115th Annual Conference in San Diego, CA", p. 45. Available from http://theiacp.org/portals/0/pdfs/2008Resolutions.pdf.

Recommendation 10

In particular, the International Tracing Instrument addresses a topic with considerable technological implications. To ensure its continued relevance, the Instrument could be strengthened by taking into account new developments in technologies to enhance weapons marking, record-keeping and tracing. Member States may wish to consider developing a supplement to the Instrument, such as a technical annex, which would reflect the implications of present-day technology on the marking, record-keeping and tracing of small arms. Furthermore, they could consider enhancing the assistance and capacity-building side of international tracing, also in the context of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

IV. Adequacy, effectiveness and sustainability of financial and technical assistance, including the transfer of technology and equipment, particularly to developing countries since 2001, for the full implementation of the Programme of Action; options for the enhanced funding of activities relating to the implementation of the Programme of Action and the International Tracing Instrument, including trust fund arrangements; and options for the establishment of programmes for the training of relevant officials

Adequacy, effectiveness and sustainability of financial and technical assistance

66. Since the adoption of the Programme of Action in 2001, the Office for Disarmament Affairs and its regional centres for peace and disarmament have been receiving funds from donors for projects in the field of small arms control. These funding mechanisms have functioned as trust funds for well over a decade. Moreover, in 2013, the United Nations Trust Facility Supporting Cooperation on Arms Regulation, a trust fund characterized by sustained donor involvement, was established. To date, 10 donor countries have provided contributions to the Trust Facility in the amount of over $9 million, which has resulted in dozens of projects being carried out on all continents.

67. Because of the deeply cross-sectional character of the issue of small arms, international assistance for activities that in themselves can be seen as implementation of the Programme of Action and the International Tracing Instrument is routed through multiple channels. Within the United Nations system, projects directly relevant to the Programme of Action are undertaken by most offices, funds and agencies that participate in United Nations internal coordination on small arms, ammunition and the arms trade. These channels range from the Peacebuilding Fund to the Voluntary Trust Fund for Assistance in Mine Action, the Crisis Prevention and Recovery Thematic Trust Fund, the UNODC Global Firearms Programme, the Safer Cities Programme of the United Nations Human Settlements Programme, the United Nations Trust Fund to End Violence against Women, the United Nations Trust Fund for Human Security and many more. Humanitarian funds and "One United Nations" funds at the country level also often include elements of

weapons management. Certain support for the offices of the special representatives of the Secretary-General for Children and Armed Conflict and on Violence against Children is relevant to small arms control, as is support for practical arms control measures in United Nations missions, from Haiti to the Sahel to Afghanistan.

68. Specialized agencies and non-United Nations entities, such as the International Maritime Organization, INTERPOL, the World Bank and the World Customs Organization, have also been deeply engaged by Member States in assistance and capacity-building on these issues. The Arms Trade Treaty voluntary trust fund is expected to be an important additional channel for capacity-building on weapons control.

69. Bilateral assistance flows and those established through regional organizations complement the picture.

70. All in all, for donor States wishing to provide practical assistance on small arms management and control — and for affected countries needing such assistance — there is an array of funding options available, from global to regional and from thematic to country level.

National reports: 2002-2006 reporting period

71. States are reminded that the agreed template for national reports under the Programme of Action does not include information on the adequacy, effectiveness or sustainability of financial and technical assistance.

72. In 2006, the United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research published an analysis of information provided by States on international assistance for implementation of the Programme of Action.[18] In that report, a significant increase was noted in the amount of financial assistance provided immediately after the adoption of the Programme of Action. Between 2001 and 2005, approximately 600 different activities taking place in at least 94 States were reported, with an estimated total cost of $660 million.

73. In financial terms, the majority of the assistance was allocated to disarmament, demobilization and reintegration programmes, followed by the destruction of small arms, light weapons and ammunition, weapons collection and stockpile management.

74. The report was based on a questionnaire circulated to Member States, since national reports were too few and did not contain enough data for analysis. It acknowledged that States might list only selected examples of their activities and that few national reports consistently included monetary values for the assistance provided and fewer still for assistance received.[19]

[18] Kerry Maze and Sarah Parker, *International Assistance for Implementing the Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects: Findings of a Global Survey* (Geneva, United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research, 2006).

[19] Ibid., p. 4.

National reports: 2007-2016 reporting period

75. For the years after 2006, no comprehensive analysis of international assistance is available. The tables below show information that can be deducted from national reports received by the Secretariat.

Table 1
Number of reports received

	Africa	*Asia and the Pacific*	*Eastern Europe*	*Latin America and the Caribbean*	*Western Europe and others*	*Total*
2007-2008	34	17	20	16	23	110
2009-2010	34	18	19	15	22	108
2011-2012	22	12	19	13	18	84
2013-2014	20	11	17	12	16	76
2015-2016	15	10	16	14	14	69

Table 2
Number of States requesting assistance in national reports

	Africa	*Asia and the Pacific*	*Eastern Europe*	*Latin America and the Caribbean*	*Western Europe and others*	*Total*
2007-2008	14	2	1	4	1	22
2009-2010	8	5	1	4	–	18
2011-2012	9	1	2	2	–	14
2013-2014	9	1	6	4	–	20
2015-2016	13	3	2	11	1	30

Table 3
Number of States reporting receiving assistance

	Africa	*Asia and the Pacific*	*Eastern Europe*	*Latin America and the Caribbean*	*Western Europe and others*	*Total*
2007-2008	11	1	3	5	1	21
2009-2010	7	2	1	3	–	13
2011-2012	3	–	2	3	–	8
2013-2014	6	1	–	1	–	8
2015-2016	3	3	3	1	–	10

Table 4
Number of States reporting willingness to provide financial and/or technical assistance

	Africa	*Asia and the Pacific*	*Eastern Europe*	*Latin America and the Caribbean*	*Western Europe and others*	*Total*
2007-2008	2	3	2	1	18	26
2009-2010	3	2	5	1	17	28
2011-2012	1	2	1	1	9	14
2013-2014	1	1	1	1	11	15
2015-2016	4	1	6	4	–	15

Table 5
Number of States having included an amount of assistance received, and total of those amounts

	Number of States reporting on amount received	*Total (United States dollars)*
2007-2008	3 out of 20	795 000
2009-2010	1 out of 13	900 000
2011-2012	5 out of 8	4 391 000
2013-2014	5 out of 8	1 134 000
2015-2016	3 out of 10	802 034

Table 6
Number of States having included an amount of assistance provided, and total of those amounts

	Number of States reporting on amount provided	*Total (United States dollars)*
2007-2008	5 out of 26	440 000
2009-2010	10 out of 28	90 980 000
2011-2012	9 out of 14	45 528 000
2013-2014	6 out of 15	290 145 000
2015-2016	5 out of 10	31 665 057

76. In July 2015, in a note verbale, the Secretariat reminded Member States to submit — separately from their biennial national report — their views and inputs on the adequacy, effectiveness and sustainability of financial and technical assistance, for the full and effective implementation of the Programme of Action, including the transfer of technology and equipment, particularly to developing countries since 2001.[20]

[20] The note verbale was mandated in paragraph 53 of the summary by the Chair of the second Open-ended Meeting of Governmental Experts on the Implementation of the Programme of Action (available from www.un.org/disarmament/convarms/salw/mge2/).

77. At the time of reporting, six Member States had responded to the note verbale. Their views can be found at www.un.org/disarmament/bms6.

Options for the enhanced funding of activities relating to the implementation of the Programme of Action and the International Tracing Instrument, including trust fund arrangements

78. In 2005, the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development decided that controlling, preventing and reducing the proliferation of small arms and light weapons is considered official development aid.[21] This is in line with the understanding shared by all Member States that there can be no sustainable development without peace and no peace without sustainable development (see General Assembly resolution 70/1, preamble). Target 16.4 of the Sustainable Development Goals is the most concrete reflection of this collective opinion.

79. As mentioned, funding to prevent, combat and eradicate the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons is channelled through countless mechanisms at the bilateral, regional and global levels. It is not a lack of available trust funds that hinders full implementation of the Programme of Action; in fact, existing trust fund arrangements can accommodate higher contributions and a broader donor base.

80. Apart from increasing funding, States can consider strengthening the mechanism on assistance and cooperation under the Programme of Action. It will be important to do this without setting up a duplicate layer at the United Nations: programmes are usually best implemented in the field. Still, at the global level more can be done to connect requests for assistance with possible donor interest.

81. Most States reporting under the Programme of Action include in their national reports information on their national assistance needs. However, the Programme of Action does not provide a mechanism for matching these needs with available resources. Many States that have reported their need for assistance have not received a reply or a show of interest.

82. The Secretariat will address this gap by pointing towards these reported assistance needs when opening its annual call for proposals under the United Nations Trust Facility Supporting Cooperation on Arms Regulation. States may wish to consider other options for possible clearing house arrangements under the Programme of Action.

83. Indicator 16.4.2 may be leading in this regard. When this indicator is adopted, it is foreseen that States will develop the capacity to record and trace seized weapons, as well as the capacity to collect data on those actions. Assistance programmes could focus on building capacity for record-keeping, tracing and data collection. Moreover, fully in line with the 2030 Agenda, programmes could focus on developing additional national and regional indicators.

[21] See www.poa-iss.org/RevCon2/Documents/PrepCom-Background/OECD-DAC%202005%20decision.pdf.

Recommendation 11

In the preparations for the third United Nations Conference to Review Progress Made in the Implementation of the Programme of Action, to be held in 2018, States are encouraged to consider enhancing the purpose of biennial national reports. In particular, the needs requests formulated therein could benefit from more sustained treatment and consideration.

Recommendation 12

In the context of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, States have underlined that follow-up and review processes regarding the Sustainable Development Goals will build on existing platforms and processes, where they exist. The Programme of Action is such an existing process. Future meetings under the Programme of Action could become a driving force for progress under target 16.4 of the Sustainable Development Goals. This would also be consistent with the aim agreed to by States in paragraph 27 (i) of the outcome of the Fifth Biennial Meeting of States to Consider Implementation of the Programme of Action (2014), to consider options for developing a more comprehensive international assistance framework.

Recommendation 13

In addition to global indicator 16.4.2, and in line with the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, States are encouraged to develop under target 16.4 of the Sustainable Development Goals indicators at the regional and national levels. The Third Review Conference could become the starting point for information exchange on such endeavours.

Options for the establishment of programmes for the training of relevant officials

84. Many programmes for the training of officials in the field of small arms control are already in existence. A few examples from the past year will illustrate the range of training-related assistance currently provided.

85. The Department of Peacekeeping Operations, in particular the Mine Action Service, conducted many training activities, including on weapons and explosive hazard management; refurbishment and construction of weapons and ammunition storage facilities; and weapons collection and destruction. UNODC provided legislative assistance; technical assistance; and training on investigative and prosecutorial capacity to deal with complex, often transnational cases of firearms trafficking. The United Nations Development Programme supported authorities in establishing national coordinating bodies on small arms; supported small arms collection and awareness-raising, improved record-keeping and reporting software for licences for arms transfers; trained citizen security and armed violence reduction projects; provided training on stockpile management; and supported marking activities. The United Nations Children's Fund provided policy support and education on weapons-related risk reduction. The United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research, together with United Nations partners, has trained officials on conducting a national assessment of priority gaps and needs in weapons and ammunition management. The Office for Disarmament Affairs, including its

regional centres for peace and disarmament, provided training on ammunition life-cycle management; trained hundreds of national officials, including on marking and record-keeping, tracing and stockpile management; trained female legal operators to address impunity in small arms trafficking; supported officials of regional organizations; and conducted many more training activities.

86. The training activities of all involved entities consistently apply the International Small Arms Control Standards and the International Ammunition Technical Guidelines.

United Nations programme of fellowships on disarmament

87. Launched by the General Assembly in 1978 at its first special session devoted to disarmament, the United Nations programme of fellowships on disarmament is aimed at training and building the capacity of officials from Member States to enable them to participate more effectively in forums to deliberate and negotiate international disarmament. The programme consistently includes the issue of the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons in its curriculum.

Recommendation 14

Training programmes for national officials are best organized in the field as much as possible. Global training programmes on small arms control would not allow for regional or national specificities.

Recommendation 15

When assessing the need for a training programme for national officials, it would be beneficial to embed such a programme in wider national small arms strategies. Training should be based on specific demand, should be targeted at a specific category of officials and should have clear outcome objectives. Gender considerations are always relevant in small-arms-related training. National inter-agency training programmes are often more fruitful than those bringing together officials from several countries of a region. Specialized agencies and the United Nations regional centres for peace and disarmament offer specialized expertise.

Recommendation 16

Training programmes focusing on capacity-building for data collection under indicator 16.4.2 deserve special consideration.